THE MUSLIM

AT

PRAYER

A Comparison to Prayer in the Bible

with an introduction to

The Mosque in Islām

by

Ahmed Deedat

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٢
الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥ اهْدِنَا
الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ٧

"In the name of Allāh, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.[1] All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path - the path of those You have blessed, not those who have earned Your anger, nor those who have gone astray."

---

[1] *Ar-Raḥmān ar-raḥeem* are two attributive names of Allāh derived from the word *"raḥmah"* (mercy). In Arabic grammar both are intensive forms of "merciful" (i.e., extremely merciful). A double meaning is intended by using both together. *Raḥmān* is used only to describe Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta`ālā*), while *raḥeem* might be used to describe a person as well. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was described in the Qur'ān as *raḥeem*. *Raḥmān* is above the human level (i.e., intensely merciful). Since one usually understands intensity to be something of short duration, Allāh describes Himself also as *raḥeem* (i.e., continually merciful).

Raḥmān also carries a wider meaning - merciful to all creation. Justice is a part of this mercy. *Raḥeem* has a meaning of specificity - especially and specifically merciful to the believers. Forgiveness is a part of this mercy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Mosque in Islām

In order to better understand Islām, it is helpful to know what a mosque means to Muslims. It differs considerably from what a church is to Christians. For example, a Muslim does not belong to a mosque as a Christian belongs to a church. For Muslims, the offering of prayers is not confined to a mosque at all; rather, they can pray outside the mosque anywhere in the world.



Who Can Lead the Prayers?

As there is no priesthood in Islām, any Muslim who knows the essentials of prayer can lead the congregational prayer in a mosque. As long as he has the knowledge of the specific prayers offered on particular occasions such as death and 'Eed celebrations, he can lead congregational prayers or perform other religious ceremonies. However, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to choose the most qualified person to lead the prayer - the one who excels all others in Qur'ānic knowledge and righteousness. Usually, an *imām* is chosen who is well-versed in Islāmic law and jurisprudence, but it must be understood that this is not a definitive criteria for ability to lead the prayer.

Who Owns a Mosque?

The actual structure of a mosque along with all of its contents is intended for the service of Allāh alone. Hence its ownership does not belong to any individual or organization. The owner of the land on which a mosque is constructed divests himself of its ownership in the name of Allāh; so, unlike a church, a mosque cannot be sold, mortgaged or rented. Thus the sanctity of a mosque is preserved in Islām.

The Use of a Mosque

A mosque is essentially a sacred place meant for congregational prayers, but it can be used as a center for

education, social welfare and the decision of matters according to Islāmic law.

The Building of a Mosque

When a mosque is constructed, it is aligned in the direction of the *Ka'bah* (the mosque which was built by Prophet Abraham in Makkah al-Mukarramah). All Muslims from the four corners of the world face the *Ka'bah* at the time of prayer. Thus the *Ka'bah* is a symbol of the ceremonial uniformity and singleness of devotion which exists over and above the spiritual unity of faith in one God that all Muslims possess.

Unity of Faith

In order to further comprehend this unity of faith, it is beneficial to make a comparative study of the relationship between the various aspects of Islāmic prayer and the teachings of the People of the Book (i.e., the Jews and the Christians). This study is also necessary to refute the strong misconception that exists today among non-Muslims that Islām is a mystical cult abounding in dogmas, superstitions and rituals.

The fact about Islām is that it is a simple, reasonable and practical religion free from priestcraft and the above charges. It is a way of life for the social, moral and spiritual development of humanity. It does not demand a man to surrender his reasoning faculties nor does it demand a blind

faith in obscure and inexplicable mysteries. It teaches the purest form of monotheism and regards polytheism as an unpardonable sin.

Although Islām is regarded as the youngest of all revealed religions, it is not a new religion; rather, it is a continuation of the first religion of God to man, restored to its original purity, and purged and purified, time after time, from all human adulterations. Thus all prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad (peace be upon them) preached the same religion, which continued to grow until it reached perfection at the hands of Prophet Muḥammad. As a matter of fact, Islām is the only religion in the world that commands its followers to respect and revere the founders of all revealed religions, such as Abraham, Moses, Noah, Jesus, etc.

Muḥammad in the Bible

The advent of Prophet Muḥammad has been prophesied in religious scriptures, including the Bible. In the words of Jesus in the New Testament:

> *"And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Comforter,[2] that he may abide with you forever."* (John 14:16)
>
> *"But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me."* (John 15:26)
>
> *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you."* (John 16:7)
>
> *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak: and he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you."* (John 16:12-14)

---

[2]The word "comforter" is the English translation of the Greek word "periclytos" which is almost a literal translation of the Aramaic or Hebrew word "Mauhamana" used by Jesus himself, and which correlates with the name of Prophet Muḥammad. (Refer to footnote number 5438 - Yūsuf 'Alī translation of the Holy Qur'ān.)

ماكان لله أن يتخذ من ولد سبحانه إذا قضى أمرا
فإنما يقول له كن فيكون

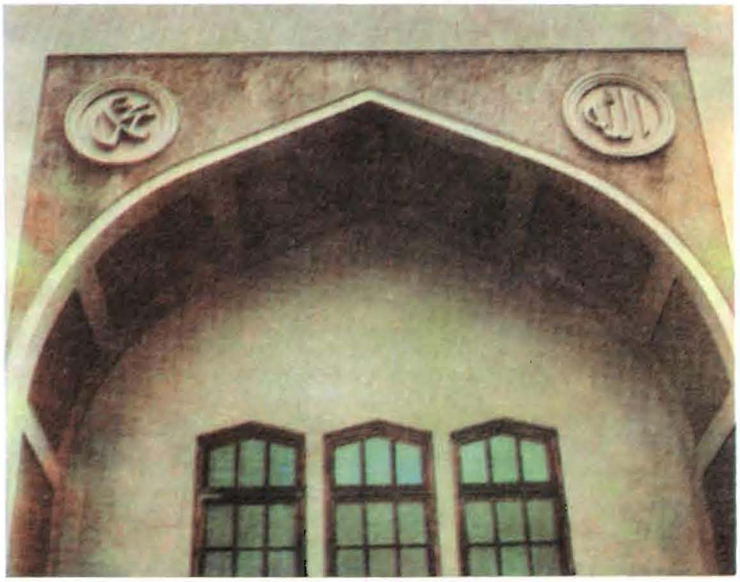
"It is not befitting to [the majesty of] God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter He only says to it "Be," and it is." (Qur'ān 19:35)

Begetting a son is a physical act and is against God's nature. "Son of God" should not be taken in a literal sense because God addresses His chosen servants as His "sons." Adam (Luke 3:38), Solomon (1 Chronicles 28:6), Jesus (Luke 3:22), Israel (Exodus 4:22) and Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:9) were "God's first born."

The New Testament also interprets "son of God" to be allegorical:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

"...In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil..." (1 John 3:9-10)



"There is no other object of worship but God: Muḥammad is the Messenger of God."

قل هو الله أحد. الله الصمد. لم يلد ولم يولد. ولم يكن له كفوا أحد.

"Say, 'He is Allāh [God], [who is] One [single and unique], Allāh the Eternal Refuge.[3] He is neither born nor gives birth, nor is there to Him any equivalent.' " (Qur'ān 112:1-4)

"To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare unto Him?" (Isaiah 40:18)

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." ' " (Matthew 4:10)

---

[3]The one sought out in times of difficulty and need; the one depended upon by all.

Prayer in Islām

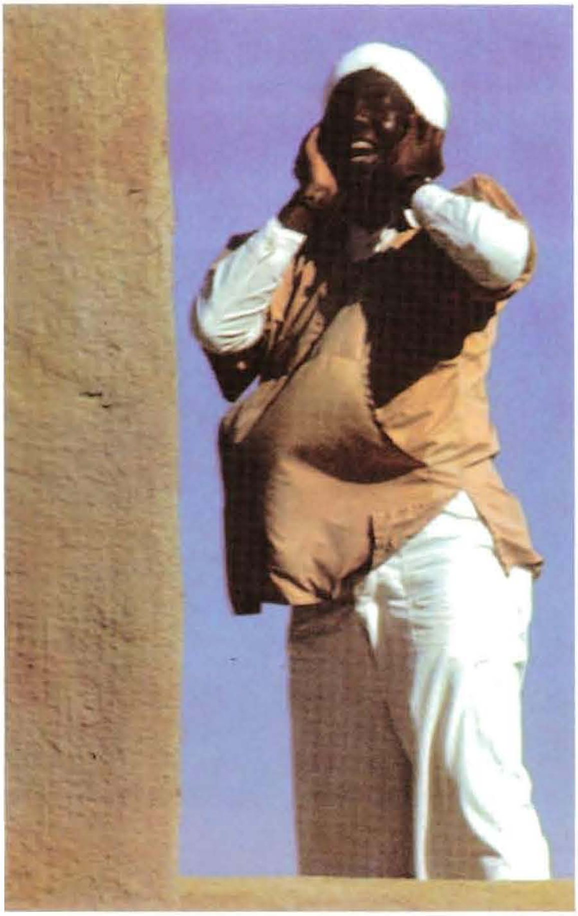
Prayer was the first obligatory act of worship ordained by Allāh in Islām, and it is the first thing for which one will be called to account on the Day of Judgement. It is not merely to be performed but is to be established by the individual - in the home and in the community - in order that the benefit intended by Allāh should be realized. Yet, first and foremost, it is to be established in obedience to Allāh and in observance of His right upon every servant.

Prayer in Islām is a unique act which includes the tongue, body, heart and mind. It is an ancient form of worship which was practiced by the earlier prophets and their followers as an essential part of the religion of God. Then came the confirmation and completion of monotheistic religion in the final message from Allāh through Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). The Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ) was charged with teaching all acts of worship in their final and perfected form in the way prescribed by Allāh, purified of those alterations and innovations previously introduced by men. The Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated the correct method of prayer and said, "Pray as you have seen me praying." [4]

---

[4] Related by al-Bukhārī.

Five times a day, every day, a caller to prayer climbs to the minaret and calls the faithful to prayer, his voice ringing clear over the rooftops and across the streets...



ياأيها الذين آمنوا إذا نودى للصلاة من يوم الجمعة فاسعوا إلى ذكر الله

"O you who believe, when the call is made for prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of Allāh."

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Make two silver trumpets... you shall use them for calling the assembly... When they blow of them, all the assembly shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (Numbers 10:1-3)

The Call to Prayer

(an international anthem of some 900 million Muslims worldwide)

Allāh is greatest.*

I bear witness that there is no other object of worship but Allāh.**

I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.**

Come to prayer.**

Come to success.**

Allāh is greatest.**

There is no other object of worship but Allāh.

*repeated 4 times
**repeated 2 times

...the faithful come to the mosque and take off their shoes so that they may enter the house of worship in bare feet...

فلما أتاها نودي ياموسى. إني أنا ربك فاخلع نعليك إنك بالواد المقدس طوى.

"When he came to the fire a voice was uttered, 'O Moses! I am your Lord, therefore take off your shoes, for you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā.' " (Qur'ān 20:11-12).

"(And God said to Moses), 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.'" (Exodus 3:5, also Acts 7:33)

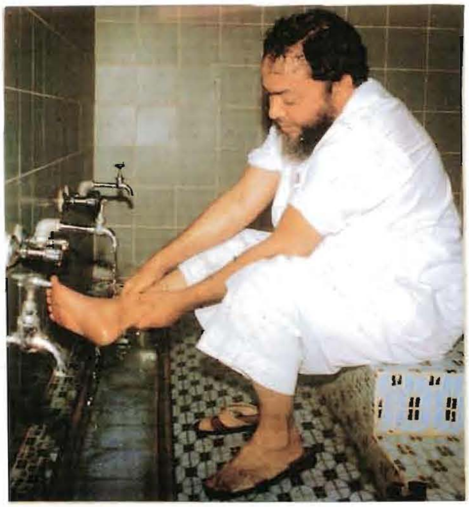


...but before entering the mosque they make ablution, washing their faces, hands and feet...

يأيها الذين آمنوا إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة فاغسلوا
وجوهكم وأيديكم إلى المرافق وامسحوا برؤوسكم وأرجلكم إلى الكعبين

"O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows and wipe your heads and wash your feet to the ankles." (Qur'ān 5:7)

"And Moses, Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet with water from it. When they went into the tabernacle of the congregation... they washed as the Lord had commanded Moses." (Exodus 40:31-32)



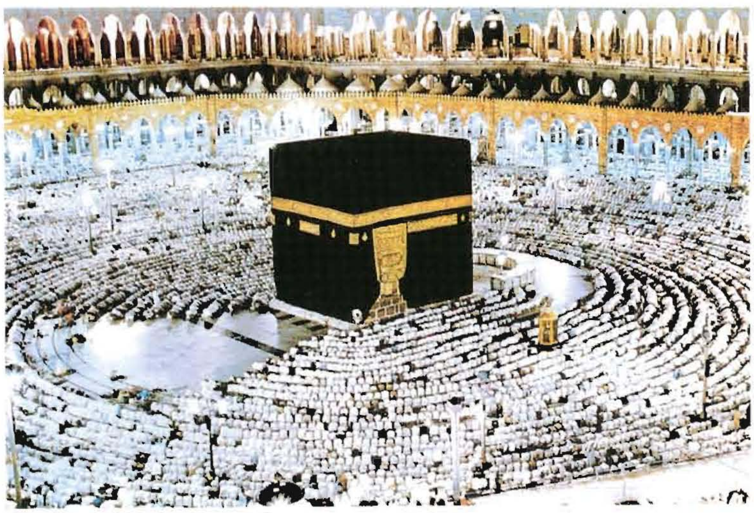
"Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple..." (Acts 21:26)

...and in the mosque the faithful face the Great Mosque in Makkah, whether in prayer, while reciting or seeking the blessings of God, in unison with the faithful from all over the world...

فول وجهك شطر المسجد الحرام وحيث ماكنتم فولوا وجوهكم شطره

"So turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque, and [O Muslims], wheresoever you may be, turn your faces towards it." (Qur'ān 2:144)

"Now when Daniel... went home. And in his upper room, with his window open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." (Daniel 6:10)







...the house of worship is a place of peace and serenity, without images or idols - it is simple, with a carpet on which to stand or sit or meditate...

إن الله لايغفر أن يشرك به ويغفر ما دون ذلك لمن يشاء
ومن يشرك بالله فقد ضل ضلالا بعيدا

"God forgives not [the sin of] joining other gods with Him... one who joins other gods with God has strayed far away [from the path]." (Qur'ān 4:116)

"I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourself to them nor serve them." (The First Commandment, Exodus 20:2-5)

...and when the time of prayer is due the faithful stand and bow before God and make obeisance to Him by touching the ground before them with their foreheads...

لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله هو المسيح ابن مريم وقال المسيح
يابني إسرائيل اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم

"They have indeed blasphemed who say that Allāh is Christ, the son of Maryam, while Christ has said, 'O Children of Israel, worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord.' "
(Qur'ān 5:72)

لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله ثالث ثلاثة ومامن إله إلا إله واحد

"They have indeed blasphemed who say that Allāh is one of three. And there is no god except one God." (Qur'ān 5:73)

"And behold, one came and said to him [i.e., Jesus], 'Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' So he said to him, 'Why do you call me good? – No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into eternal life, keep the commandments.' " (Matthew 19:16–17)

يا أيها الذين آمنوا اركعوا واسجدوا واعبدوا ربكم وافعلوا الخير لعلكم تفلحون

"O you who believe, bow down and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord and do good that you may prosper."
(Qur'ān 22:77)

"And he [i.e., Jesus] went a little further and fell on his face and prayed..." (Matthew 26:39)

"And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped..." (Joshua 5:14)

"And Elijah... bowed down upon the earth and put his face between his knees." (1 Kings 18:42)

"So Moses and Aaron... fell upon their faces..." (Numbers 20:6)

"Then Abraham fell on his face..." (Genesis 17:3)



...and invariably the faithful spread out their hands to God asking forgiveness, seeking His blessings, beseeching His protection for mankind...



ربنا آتنا في الدنيا حسنة وفي الآخرة حسنة وقنا عذاب النار

"Our Lord give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of the Fire." (Qur'ān 2:201)

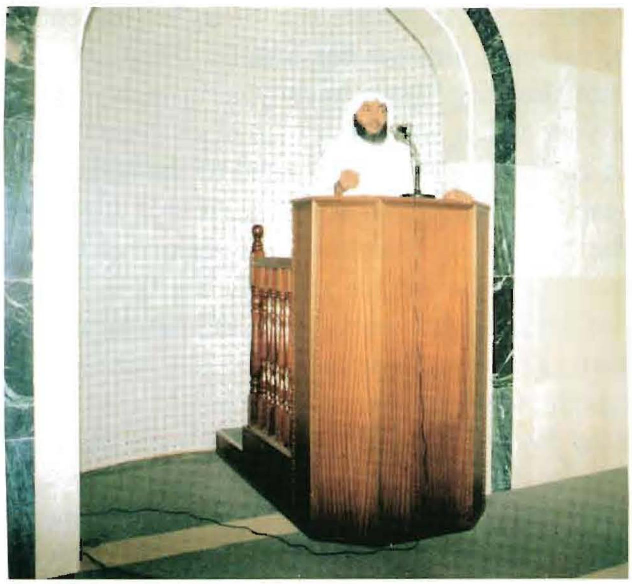
"...when Solomon finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he arose from before the altar of the Lord from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven." (1 Kings 8:54)

"And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard me. And I know that You always hear me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this that they may believe that You have sent me.'" (John 11:41-42)

...and on Fridays immediately after noon before the prayer, the imām ascends the pulpit to deliver a speech so that the faithful may listen to and heed the words of God, and so shall it be forever.

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا نودى للصلاة من يوم الجمعة فاسعوا إلى ذكر الله وذروا
البيع ذلكم خير لكم إن كنتم تعلمون. فإذا قضيت الصلاة فانتشروا في الأرض
وابتغوا من فضل الله واذكروا الله كثيرا لعلكم تفلحون.

"When the call is sounded for prayer on Fridays, hasten to the remembrance of God... but when the prayer has ended disperse throughout the land and seek the bounty of God. And remember God often that you may be successful." (Qur'ān 62:9-10)



BIRTH OF JESUS
A QUR'ĀNIC CONCEPTION

"Relate in the Book [the story of Mary] when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen [to screen herself] from them; then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said, 'I seek refuge from you to [God] Most Merciful. [Come not near] if you do fear God.' He said, 'No, I am only a messenger from your Lord [to announce] to you the gift of a pure son.' She said, 'How shall I have a son seeing that no man has touched me and I am not unchaste?' He said, 'So [it will be]. Your Lord says, "That is easy for Me, and [I wish] to appoint him as a sign unto men and a mercy from Us. It is a matter decreed."'

So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place... At length she brought [the babe] to her people, carrying him [in her arms]. They said, 'O Mary! Truly an amazing thing have you brought. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil nor your mother a woman unchaste!' But she pointed to the babe. They said, 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' He [i.e., the babe] said, 'I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me revelation and has made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be and has enjoined upon me prayer and charity as long as I live. [He has made me] kind to my mother and not overbearing or unblessed. So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die and the day that I shall be raised up to life [again].'"

Such was Jesus the son of Mary - the statement of truth about which they [vainly] dispute." (Qur'ān 19:16-22, 27-34)

وَٱذۡكُرۡ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ مَرۡيَمَ إِذِ ٱنتَبَذَتۡ
مِنۡ أَهۡلِهَا مَكَانٗا شَرۡقِيّٗا ١٦ فَٱتَّخَذَتۡ مِن دُونِهِمۡ حِجَابٗا
فَأَرۡسَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرٗا سَوِيّٗا ١٧ قَالَتۡ إِنِّيٓ
أَعُوذُ بِٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ مِنكَ إِن كُنتَ تَقِيّٗا ١٨ قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ رَسُولُ
رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَٰمٗا زَكِيّٗا ١٩ قَالَتۡ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي
غُلَٰمٞ وَلَمۡ يَمۡسَسۡنِي بَشَرٞ وَلَمۡ أَكُ بَغِيّٗا ٢٠ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ
قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٞۖ وَلِنَجۡعَلَهُۥٓ ءَايَةٗ لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحۡمَةٗ
مِّنَّاۚ وَكَانَ أَمۡرٗا مَّقۡضِيّٗا ٢١ ۞ فَحَمَلَتۡهُ فَٱنتَبَذَتۡ
بِهِۦ مَكَانٗا قَصِيّٗا ٢٢

فَأَتَتۡ بِهِۦ قَوۡمَهَا تَحۡمِلُهُۥۖ قَالُواْ يَٰمَرۡيَمُ لَقَدۡ جِئۡتِ شَيۡـٔٗا
فَرِيّٗا ٢٧ يَٰٓأُخۡتَ هَٰرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ ٱمۡرَأَ سَوۡءٖ وَمَا كَانَتۡ
أُمُّكِ بَغِيّٗا ٢٨ فَأَشَارَتۡ إِلَيۡهِۖ قَالُواْ كَيۡفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِي
ٱلۡمَهۡدِ صَبِيّٗا ٢٩ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبۡدُ ٱللَّهِ ءَاتَىٰنِيَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِي
نَبِيّٗا ٣٠ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيۡنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوۡصَٰنِي بِٱلصَّلَوٰةِ
وَٱلزَّكَوٰةِ مَا دُمۡتُ حَيّٗا ٣١ وَبَرَّۢا بِوَٰلِدَتِي وَلَمۡ يَجۡعَلۡنِي
جَبَّارٗا شَقِيّٗا ٣٢ وَٱلسَّلَٰمُ عَلَيَّ يَوۡمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوۡمَ أَمُوتُ
وَيَوۡمَ أُبۡعَثُ حَيّٗا ٣٣ ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَۖ قَوۡلَ ٱلۡحَقِّ
ٱلَّذِي فِيهِ يَمۡتَرُونَ ٣٤

JESUS IS NOT GOD	MUḤAMMAD IS NOT GOD
"And behold God will say, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say unto men, "Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of God?" ' He will say, 'Glory to You, never could I say what I had no right [to say]. Had I said such a thing You would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart although I know not what is in Yours, for You know in full all that is hidden. Never did I say to them anything except what You did command me to say, [which was] "worship God, my Lord and your Lord."' " (Qur'ān 5:119-120) Compare with the following verses of the Bible: 1. John 5:30 2. John 12:49 3. John 14:28 4. Isaiah 42:8 5. Acts 2:22	*"Say [O Muḥammad to the people], 'I am but a man like you. It is revealed to me by inspiration that your God is one God, so stand true to Him and ask for His forgiveness.' And woe to those who join gods with God."* (Qur'ān 41:6) *Some people maintain that Muslims worship Muḥammad instead of God, and they refer to Muslims as "Mohammedans." The above verse disproves such an allegation as Muḥammad never claimed divinity for himself. He was a prophet like any other messenger of God. The word "Mohammedism," as applied to the Islāmic religion, is a mislabeling. Islām means submission to the will of God, and its followers are called Muslims.*

How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman? (Job 25:4)

قل إنما أنا بشر
مثلكم يو حى إلى أنما
إلهكم إله واحد
فاستقيموا إليهواستغفروه
وويل للمشركين

وإذ قال الله ياعيسى
ابن مريم أأنت قلت
للناس اتخذوني وأمى
إلاهين من دون الله
قال سبحانك مايكون
لي أن أقول ما ليس
لي بحق إن كنت قلته
فقد علمته تعلم ما في
نفسي ولا أعلم ما في
نفسك إنك أنت علام
الغيوب(١١٦) ما قلت
لهم إلا ما أمرتني به
أن اعبدوا الله ربي
وربكم

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS FROM THE BIBLE BEAR TESTIMONY TO THE QUR'ĀNIC TRUTH THAT

JESUS IS NOT GOD

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know." (Acts 2:22)

"And I fell at his feet to worship him but he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant and of your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!'" (Revelation 19:10)

"For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent me gave me a command - what I should say and what I should speak." (John 12:49)

"I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." (John 5:30-31)

"...for my Father is greater than I." (John 14:28)

"And this is life eternal that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3)

"Verily, verily, I say to you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; nor is he who is sent greater than He who sent him." (John 13:16)

"Jesus said to her [i.e., Mary Magdalene]... I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John 20:17)

"But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32)

"But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God." (John 8:40)